

But What Can We Do Now?

1. Want to help **muck out/ clean out houses?** you can connect with the Lutheran Disaster Assistance webinar: Disaster Response Muck and Gut 2 Hour Webinar, Wednesday Sept 22, 2021 10:00 AM-12:00 PM Eastern 2-hour webinar containing the basic issues that need to be addressed before starting the Muck and Gut of a home impacted by a disaster. Volunteers are an important piece in the clean-up of a community impacted by a disaster. Forms identifying volunteer skills, client information and release forms will be reviewed. We will discuss the safety issues that need to be assessed before, during, and after the clean out of a home. We will also look at some of the steps that can prevent the damage of a residence in freezing temperatures and other preventative steps that can be taken to reduce damage. Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/disaster-response-muck-and-gut-tickets-171292188547>
2. If a group from your church would like to help clean out houses with the Southern Baptists, Interested volunteers can register at **BRNunited.org**, which is the Southern Baptist resource network. They will welcome volunteers to work alongside them and there is plenty of work to do. Please have available the dates your group wants to work and the number of people in the group. After a current group leaves this weekend, he can't offer housing. So that leaves local volunteers as a source of help. Volunteers should be out fitted with work boots, long pants and sleeves. Vaccination is recommended but not required. Respirators are worn indoors, but not outdoors.
3. Crisis Clean up is another organization that helps coordinate clean up efforts. I don't know that they allow individuals to sign on to get a place to work, but congregations as an organization should be able to do that. You can learn more about that at: <https://www.crisiscleanup.org/about> or <https://www.facebook.com/CrisisCleanup/>
4. Although **Eastwick** was not impacted by Hurricane Ida, a number of homes were flooded by Tropical Storm Isaias in July and work still needs to be done in that area. Getting teams out to work on this while the recovery for Ida is still in process would be greatly helpful. The same contacts as listed above will be helpful in knowing how to help with Eastwick- especially the Lutheran program and UCC ministries – Judy Moore (802-299-8290) or IsaiasRecoveryVolunteers@gmail.com.
5. Members/Friends might consider accompanying persons they know to centers where the agencies responding to disasters are taking registrations for assistance. This would be especially important for survivors for whom English is a second language, and for persons with emotional issues (like some forms of autism, depression or anxiety). These centers are often crowded, confusing, and emotional which causes additional stress for those already stressed by the trauma of disaster. A calming presence can be very helpful.
6. Clean up kits: check at this link to find out what goes in Church World Service Clean-up kits: <https://cwskits.org/assemble-kits/emergency-cleanup-buckets/>
7. School kits: children might have lost their school supplies: <https://cwskits.org/assemble-kits/school-kits/>
8. Encourage any persons who had damage from Ida to register with FEMA. They may have to register for a Small Business Loan (even if they don't have a business) and be denied that before they qualify for an Individual Loan. There are deadlines for registering. FEMA does offer support to renters whose have been displaced due to flooding from Hurricane Ida. More information can be found at: <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/renters-may-apply-federal-assistance>

9. Touch base with other faith communities in your area to consider a united response to the disaster. This is the best way to avoid duplication of effort. Disaster Response Centers will soon be opening in various areas. These are good locations to tap into joint efforts like providing water, mucking out, plans for rebuilding.
10. If you are near to a community which has had much damage, consider opening a computer site for people who do not have computers. It is really hard to complete the FEMA forms if you do not have access to a computer. If you know where computers are being offered for use, make sure you publicize that information widely.
11. Look to your members/friends for persons who might serve on Long Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs). We would like to have a Presbyterian presence on each group. You will be provided with support as to what PDA can bring to the table (we have a variety of resources from grant money, webinars, and workshops that can be offered to support LTRG efforts).
12. **National Preparedness Month** is an observance each September to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies that could happen at any time. This year the CDC offers the Bring Down Barriers toolkit to bring additional focus to the needs of all populations affected by disasters. The toolkit includes social media messages and graphics that highlight ways the whole community can come together to reduce or remove barriers to emergency preparedness and response. Organizations and individuals interested in amplifying this information can use #PrepYourHealth and #BringDownBarriers on social media platforms.

This year's National Preparedness Month brings attention to the challenges people face that can make it difficult for them to prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency. Often, more than one challenge occurs at a time. Some of the most common challenges are communication, social, and transportation barriers, and challenges with processes and systems. Bringing down these barriers requires the whole community to work together.

Learn more about this important topic by joining CDC's Center for Preparedness and Response for a webinar on Wednesday, September 15, at 1 p.m. ET. The webinar will feature presentations by CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities and Georgia Tech's Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI). CDC encourages leaders who are responsible for the safety of others to attend. You can learn more about this webinar at: https://www.emergency.cdc.gov/epic/learn/2021/webinar_20210915.asp?cid=EPRhomepage
13. **CERT training:** Community- and faith-based organizations can help diversify FEMA's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. The CERT program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area. It also trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. You can learn more about CERT training at: <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-317.a>
14. Disaster Resource Centers (DRCs) will be opening in each county. When we have more information about where these are located we will let you know.